



King County Board of Ethics
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KING COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS MEETING NOTICE

When: Tuesday, February 19, 2002, at 4:30 p.m.

Where: Bank of California Building
900 Fourth Avenue, 4th Avenue and Marion Street, Seattle
5th floor conference room, northwest corner of building

AGENDA

1. ***Approval of Agenda***
2. ***Approval of Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2001 and January 12, 2002.***
3. ***Request for Review of HUM Guidelines.***
4. ***2002 Initiatives. Discussion and approval.***
 - Training and Education
 - Board Outreach
5. ***Ethics Legislation & Policies.*** Status Report
 - Proposed Amendment Relating to Post Employment Restriction
 - Procedures for Disseminating Ethics Information and Conducting Ethics Training
 - Procedures for Filing Acknowledgment of Receipt Statements, Statements of Financial and Other Interests, and Consultant Disclosure Forms
6. ***Staff Report.***
 - Monthly Bulletin—Current Ethics Issues
 - Financial Disclosure Program 2002
 - Board Reception—June 20, 2002
 - Washington State Ethics Conference—December 3, 2002 (NEW DATE)
 - Public Disclosure Request
 - Board Response to Request for Advisory Opinion
 - Activities of Other Ethics Boards

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ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE

The February 19, 2002, meeting of the King County Board of Ethics was called to order by Chair Price Spratlen at 4:30 p.m. Board members in attendance were:

Lois Price Spratlen, Ph.D., Chair
Margaret T. Gordon, Ph.D.
Lembhard G. Howell, Esq.
Rev. Paul F. Pruitt

Mr. Roland H. Carlson had an excused absence

Others in attendance:

Ms. Catherine A. Clemens, Administrator, King County Board of Ethics
Mr. Donald J. Porter, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney
Mr. Mike Veitenhans, Communications Specialist, Human Resources Management Division,
Department of Executive Services

1. *Proposed Agenda.* Mr. Howell moved and Rev. Pruitt seconded that the board approve the proposed agenda. The board unanimously adopted the motion.

Chair Price Spratlen asked for introductions from those present.

2. *Approval of Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2001 and January 12, 2002.* Rev. Pruitt moved and Dr. Gordon seconded that the board approve the November 19, 2001, meeting minutes. The board unanimously adopted the motion. Rev. Pruitt moved and Mr. Howell seconded that the board approve the January 12, 2002, meeting minutes. The board unanimously adopted the motion.

3. *Request for Review of HUM Guidelines.* Mr. Veitenhans explained his request for advisory opinion to the board. He is a communications specialist for the county's human resources management division. One of his jobs is to manage the HUM, a weekly e-mail message system that publishes brief news items of general interest to King County employees. Mr. Veitenhans receives requested items, reviews for content, and publishes the news items if appropriate based on the HUM Publishing Guidelines. He asked the ethics board to review these guidelines to ensure they are compatible with county ethics. He noted that the guidelines were created some time ago, more out of the practical experience of publishing the HUM than adherence to any formal rules or regulations for employee publications. He especially wanted guidance on certain 'gray areas' not addressed in the guidelines: what exactly qualifies as a 'county-sanctioned' activity or event. In the past, he has included news of work site activities organized by individual employees and open to all employees and the public, such as weight management programs, Toastmasters meetings, garden club talks, etc., and wanted to know if these were appropriate or legal to include on this county site.

Dr. Price Spratlen stated that if organizations are clearly affiliated with the county, such as King County Credit Union, then inclusion seems appropriate. She wondered where is the line drawn for advertising for external advertising, whether or not the organization was affiliated with the county. Mr. Howell asked why not direct the question to the executive of whether or not the organization was county affiliated? If the answer is yes, running the item should be okay. He noted that Mr. Veitenhans should not have the burden of making that determination. Dr. Gordon asked why there should be advertising at all? Mr. Veitenhans replied that credit unions advertise items such as scholarships and calendars that are not considered commercial ads, but offerings of interest for employees. Chair Price Spratlen asked about the makeup of the HUM editorial board and Mr. Veitenhans stated that they are communications specialists from different departments as well as human resources staff. He noted that the board reviews each HUM notice and might refuse to run some

items, such as asking for donated sick time for a particular employee. They accept officially endorsed items, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration, Take Your Kid to Work Day, or if a county employee takes responsibility for the item. Examples of employee sponsorships include a garden club, Weight Watchers, or Toastmasters. Rev. Pruitt asked if religious groups could secure a county room and advertise on the HUM? Yes, if they qualify. Chair Price Spratlen stated it is appropriate to see if collaboration with the executive will resolve the problem.

Ms. Clemens noted that the ethics code prohibits use of county property for personal convenience or profit and allows only such use as is available to the public generally or for employees in the conduct of official business. Previous board advisory opinions support this for all county resources, including conference rooms and e-mail. Rev. Pruitt stated it would be desirable for many groups to be able to use county facilities for free, but what does that say about competition for private groups whether or not run for profit? Dr. Price Spratlen as if there had been criticisms. Mr. Veitenhans noted that criticisms had been few, but that people were now operating 'below the radar' and requesting placement of items of their own or group personal interest. The Chair stated that Mr. Veitenhans already has support from the executive and he should work more closely with that office to shape HUM guidelines.

Dr. Gordon asked about non-profit groups such as AA. Those services are probably available under employee assistance programs. Ms. Clemens noted that once the door is open to groups however worthy or of interest to county employees, the county may be required to open the door to all. Dr. Gordon stated that at the University of Washington, many varied groups are allowed to come onto campus, as long as no one is disallowed. Rev. Pruitt stated that while AA is non-profit, Weight Watchers is a for-profit commercial enterprise and that is a crucial distinction. Mr. Veitenhans stated that he will share the substance of this conversation with the executive and will advise Ms. Clemens. Chair Price Spratlen directed Ms. Clemens to work with Mr. Veitenhans, offer support on the issue to the executive, and report back to the board on the issue.

Mr. Veitenhans thanked the board and left the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

4. *2002 Initiatives.* Ms. Clemens briefed the board. First she discussed proposed training and education initiatives that would enhance current activities and expand awareness and understanding of ethics policies for county employees. The initiative included: 1) training to new employees, supervisors, human resources personnel, general employees, contract managers and contractors, financial disclosure coordinators, and board and commission members; 2) developing an existing ethics game on the ethics board web site; 3) revising training curriculum to place more emphasis on integrity and shared county values, in conjunction with compliance with the law; and 4) conducting a survey of county employees to gain benchmarks on employee's attitudes and understanding of county ethics for use in guiding future ethics programs. Ms. Clemens asked the board to approve the proposed initiatives. Chair Price Spratlen stated that these activities must be prioritized and Ms. Clemens should provide more information on when the initiatives would be taken on, the amount of staff time required, and a time when they would be completed. Mr. Howell stated that the board needed context before it could approve the scope of work. Dr. Gordon noted that the administrator should be encouraged to identify and adopt projects that are new and challenging in the interest of retaining her. The board agreed that they must have more information before approving the scope of work.

Next, Ms. Clemens briefed the board on proposed outreach activities for members. They included: 1) the annual reception; 2) a board and commission fair and roundtable to efficiently reach out to as many of the 440 members as possible with ethics information; 3) informational meetings over the course of the year to be conducted by the administrator and one board member with department directors and councilmembers. Following discussion,

Mr. Howell moved to adopt the first and third items, with priority given to meetings with councilmembers; Rev. Pruitt seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

5. *Ethics Legislation and Policies.* Ms. Clemens briefed the board. First, she reported that Mr. Buck, Administrative Services Manager, DES, was submitting the proposed amendment relating to the post employment restriction during the executive cabinet retreat on February 12, 2002. She will report again when more information is available. Second, she reported that the Procedures for Disseminating Ethics Information and Conducting Ethics Training, and Procedures for Filing Acknowledgment of Receipt Statements, Statements of Financial and Other Interests, and Consultant Disclosure Forms had been signed by the executive and distributed to all departments. However, she noted that because of the length of time between submitting the procedures and signing them, the procedures are already out of date. She will discuss this issue with Mr. Buck at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

6. *Staff Report.* Ms. Clemens briefed the board. Monthly Ethics Bulletin. Ms. Clemens will develop a monthly bulletin for the purpose of informing the ethics board, Mr. Buck, and Mr. Tanaka, Director of DES, of ethics-related issues within King County. Chair Price Spratlen noted that the document would be helpful during quarterly meetings with the executive. Financial Disclosure Program 2002. All departments are working well with the ethics office to meet the objective of 100% compliance with the filing requirement by April 15, 2002. Board Reception—June 20, 2002. The reception is scheduled for June 20, 2002, in the executive conference room on the 4th floor of the King County Courthouse, 514 Third Avenue, 12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Vice Chair von Reichbauer and Executive Sims are scheduled to attend and make brief comments. Invitees include councilmembers, department directors, members of other ethics agencies, past board members and staff, among others. The invitation will note that the event is sponsored and paid for personally by the member of the ethics board. Washington State Ethics Conference—December 3, 2002. The conference date has been moved from July to December. There is a special session designed specifically for board and commission members and ethics board members are encouraged to attend. Public Disclosure Request. Board response to fulfilling a request for public documents was enclosed. Board Response to Request for Advisory Opinion. A copy of the board response to Mr. Fletcher's request was enclosed. Activities of Other Ethics Boards. Materials for board information included the appointment of a new member to the Seattle Ethics and Election Commission; an SEEC meeting agenda, and a findings of violation of the ethics code by the Washington State Legislative Ethics Board.

Dr. Gordon acknowledged receipt of materials on the Ford Foundation's Innovations in American Government awards. She moved that any application for such an award be postponed until next year. Mr. Howell seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Howell moved and Rev. Pruitt seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The board unanimously approved the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Approved this 15th day of April, 2002, by the King County Board of Ethics.

Signed for the Board: _____
Dr. Lois Price Spratlen, Chair